

KANYAKUMARI YATRA



Significance of Kanyakumari

Kanyakumari is situated at the southernmost tip of Indian subcontinent, at the confluence of three oceans - Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea. It is a very unique confluence where literally three oceans are meeting at the very southernmost tip of India. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 10 Chapter 79 verses 16-17 mentions that Lord Balarama visited Kanyakumari in the course of His pilgrimage. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu also visited Kanyakumari during His South India tour as stated in *Sri Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya Lila* 9.223. In the year 1510, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to Kanyakumari. Lord Caitanya took His bath at the holy confluence of three oceans.

Great souls in the past have visited this place. On his way to America in Jaladuta, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada came around this place. On Jaladuta, while sailing through the Suez, Srila Prabhupada wrote in his dairy that, "here they have a street called marine drive just like the one in Bombay Chowpatty beach."

Most of the holy rivers Ganges, Yamuna and others have their final destination in one of these oceans. The fourth ocean, which is merging into the confluence of these three oceans, is the unlimited fathomless ocean of the compassionate heart of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and all the devotees are like little waves and aquatics, swimming in that ocean. Previously under the British rule it was called Cape Comorin. Kanyakumari is less than 2-3 hour drive from Trivandrum.

Legend of Kanyakumari Temple

For thousands of years Kanyakumari has been considered as one of the holy places and by bathing there one is cleansed of one's negative *karma*. Long time ago the demons conquered the demigods and tortured and persecuted saintly people. They usurped the kingdom of the demigods to build up their own empire to satisfy their greed. At that time Bhumi Devi, an expansion of the feminine potency of the Lord, approached Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu told her that she should have the demigods perform a *yajna* to Goddess Parvati.

Banasura, who was a very powerful demon, had performed great austerities and had received a benediction from Brahma, that he could only be killed by an unmarried virgin girl. So Lord Vishnu wanted to honour the words of Lord Brahma as He did while killing Hiranyakasipu.

The demigods performed the *yajna* and Parvati appeared in the form of a beautiful little girl named Kanyakumari. She told the demigods that, just be patient, let me grow up and I will satisfy all your wishes. She came to this place and feeling great separation from her eternal consort, Lord Siva, she performed severe *tapasya*. At that time Lord Siva was residing at a nearby place called *Suchindra*. Lord Siva proposed her for marriage and she readily agreed to be his consort. They set the time for a particular date at midnight. Narada muni understood that if Kanyakumari marries Lord Siva then, according to the boon of Brahma, she can't kill Banasura. So he approached Kanyakumari and explained, "You know Banasura has mystic powers. What if he has disguised as Lord Siva and proposed to you." So ask something of him that only Lord Siva can do. So she asked Lord Siva, "I want you to bring me coconuts with no eyes, mangoes without seeds and bael leaves without veins. Within seconds Lord Siva produced them. On the night of the marriage Lord Siva left Suchindra but on the way Narada muni took the form of a rooster and he crowed. So Lord Siva thought that it is almost sunrise and he had missed the auspicious time of midnight, thinking like this he returned back. Meanwhile Kanyakumari waited but Lord Siva didn't turn up. She threw the big feast that was cooked for the wedding and according to the legend it all became sand and seashells on the shore of the three oceans. She sat and performed *tapasya*, in separation, waiting for Lord Siva to come and she is still waiting.

Meanwhile Banasura heard about her and was infatuated by her beauty. He proposed to marry her. She told him, "I have given my heart to Shankar and I can give it to no one else." Banasura was enraged and he drew his sword, threatening to kill her. She took her form of Kali and with her *chakra* killed Banasura. But just before Banasura died he repented and being purified by her association, he prayed that, "Let myself and all other people for all time to come be absolved of all their sins, if they bathe here at the confluence of the three oceans." She granted that benediction and since that time tens and thousands of people come here to bathe in these sacred waters.

The deity of Kanyakumari in one hand is holding a *japa mala*, as she is waiting in separation. It is said that this blue colour deity was originally installed by Parasurama.

Love in separation

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupada told that for Vaishnavas, this *murti* is also Lakshmi Devi, born from the ocean of milk and who is now residing next to the ocean. In Kurukshetra the elder *gopis* are remembered for their love in separation and in Kanyakumari the younger unmarried *gopis* are remembered for their love. The *gopis* in their pure spotless love for Syamasundara worshipped *Katyayini* to gain Krishna as their husband. Kanyakumari and Katyayini are the same person.

Gaudiya Vaishnavas meditate on this place as a place of Vipralamba seva, a place where we remember the gopis of Vrindavana and their spotless love for Krishna and especially how it was revealed by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to the world.

Story of Sridama

In Vrindavana, in the forest of Bhandiravan, there is a *murti* of Sridama. When Krishna and Balarama were leaving Vrindavana, Krishna told Sridama that He will be back in few days and Sridama said that he will wait. Under a banyan tree, in the forest of Bhandiravan, Sridama waited for Sri Krishna and for 4500 years he waited. During His visit to Vrindavana Lord Caitanya came to Bhandiravan and He cried out with tears of separation, "Sridama, Sridama... I have come. You have been waiting for so long, I have come, I have come." Lord Caitanya in the mood of Krishna embraced the deity of Sridama.

Story of Lotha Baba

When Krishna was leaving Vrindavana, a *gopa* named Lotha Baba told Krishna that he is not going to eat or drink until He comes back. Krishna assured him that He would be back in few days. Since then Lotha Baba had been waiting for Him to return. A deity has been established for him and interestingly the *murti* is quite heavy set. Although he didn't eat anything for thousands of years, his love in separation is nourishing him.

Why come to Kanyakumari?

For us one reason is sufficient and that is Lord Caitanya visited this place. Wherever the Lord went that place was transformed into Vrindavana. Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami explained that what Lord Caitanya didn't give in Navadvipa, He gave, that in South India. In Navadvipa at that time many people were very materialistic and ritualistic but in South India people were simple and they opened their hearts to receive the Lord's mercy and attained perfection.



Beautiful surroundings on the way to Kanyakumari



Beautiful surroundings on the way to Kanyakumari



Kanyakumari



Kanyakumari



Kanyakumari



Way to Bagavathi Amman Temple at Kanyakumari



Bagavathi Amman Temple at Kanyakumari



Bagavathi Amman Temple at Kanyakumari



Sri Bagavathi Amman



Bagavathi Amman Temple



Way to Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari



Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari

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Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari

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Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari

On his way to America in Jaladuta, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) came around this place. On Jaladuta, while sailing through the Suez, Srila Prabhupada wrote in his dairy that, "here they have a street called marine drive just like the one in Bombay Chowpatty beach."



Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari
Great souls in the past have visited this place.



Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari
Kanyakumari is less than 2-3 hour drive from Trivandrum.



Triveni Sangam at Kanyakumari



Suchindra Temple near Kanyakumari



Suchindra Temple



Suchindra Temple



Suchindra Temple



Suchindra Temple



Chariot used for the pleasure of Lord at Suchindram Temple



Distances to various places from Kanyakumari



Kanyakumari



Beautiful surroundings on the way to Kanyakumari



Beautiful surroundings on the way to Kanyakumari



Beautiful surroundings on the way to Kanyakumari

Transcripts from the lectures by His Holiness Radhanath Swami Maharaj South India Yatra 2010

1. Idea behind South India Yatra

The idea of our *yatra* coming to South India was born in the hearts of several of the leading *acaryas* and priests of the Sri Sampradaya. A few years ago we were in Sri Rangam as part of our *yatra* and Sri Jiyar Swami, Narasinga Bhatta, Murali Bhatta, were insisting that in a few years, in 2010, it is the 500th anniversary of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's visit to Sri Rangam. You must come here with your full group to celebrate with us. Their invitation was with such genuine devotion and kindness that we organized everything around that. *The purpose of our yatra, the purpose of our sadhana, our seva, the very purpose of our occupation and our life is to serve the Lord and His devotees.* *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 1 Chapter 2 verse 13 states:

*atah pumbhir dvija-srestha varnasrama-vibhagasah
svanusthitasya dharmasya samsiddhir hari-tosanam*

"The auspiciousness of whatever we do is to the degree we give satisfaction to the Lord. And the Lord has taught us by His example and by His words that by pleasing the desire of those who love Him we can give Him the greatest satisfaction. And those who love Him their desire for us is to purify our own hearts so that we can be vehicles to share that love with everyone."

2. Sacimata's great devotion

In the month of Magha Lord Caitanya left Navadvipa, swam across the river Ganga and very quickly travelled by foot to Katwa, where He accepted the vows of a *sannyasi* or *swami* from the great sage Keshava Bharati Maharaj. He was planning to go to Vrindavana, but Nityananda Prabhu understood how Mother Saci and all the other devotees must be practically dying in separation. Nityananda Prabhu is the original Guru, He perfectly knows the inner most heart of the Lord, which is to satisfy His devotees. Nityananda Prabhu misguided Lord Caitanya in the opposite direction and in Santipur at Advaita bhavan, Sacidevi and all the devotees came to meet the Lord.

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu saw Sacimata, He prostrated Himself at her holy feet. Upon seeing her son in the robes of a mendicant, Sacimata began to cry. The Lord spoke to her, "That I owe you My life and I owe you My everything. But somehow or the other I have left in the madness of My love for Krishna; I have left to enter into the renounced order of life. But if you like, My mother, if it pleases you, I will stay with you." Saci devi exhibited her pure unconditional love. There was nothing that she would rather have than her Nimai living with her in her house where she could see Him, everyday cook for Him, serve Him, love Him and without it she would spend her whole life crying in separation but there was a wish which she had even greater than that, to serve the wish of her son, who had descended in this world to spread the grace of God freely to everyone and anyone through the simple chanting of the holy names, to understanding how to live in a life harmonizing everything we do in devotion to the Supreme and for a *swami* to remain rest of his life at home people would criticize and that would be worse than death. Saci devi made an appeal and requested the Lord to stay at Jagannatha Puri and in this way He can be away from home and at the same

time she will keep getting news about Him because devotees always keep going back and forth.

3. Lord begins His South India tour

In the month of Phalgun Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu arrived in Sri Jagannatha Puri. He remained there for some time. In the month of Chaitra He delivered Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. In the month of Vaishaka Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu began his South India tour. He started on the plea of finding His brother Vishvarupa, but His real purpose was to freely give His grace to everyone and any one.

As a devotee, Lord Caitanya went on the South Indian tour to establish an example. It is prophesized in the Vedic literatures that the Lord would come as a 'channa' avatar. He will come in a beautiful golden complexion, and assuming the role of His own devotee, He would teach us by His own practical example how to achieve perfection of life. In *Bhagavad Gita* Chapter 18, verse 66 Lord Krishna said,

*sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksaisyami ma sucah*

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."

That is the essence and how is that surrender done,

*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaisyasi satyam te pratijane priyo 'si me*

"Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend." -*Bhagavad Gita* Chapter 9, verse 34

He told us everything but out of His love for every living being, the Lord came again as Lord Caitanya to teach us how to surrender and always remember the Lord. Lord came to taste and distribute Srimati Radharani's love for Krishna.

In this age of kali, in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy without discriminating who is fit and unfit, the only qualification is our sincerity to receive it. Whatever we have done or whatever we haven't done, "the past is the past". If we come to right conclusions, the right behaviour, the right intentions and have a sincere heart, Lord Caitanya will give us the highest perfection in this very life.

Lord Caitanya went to all the holy places, temples, forests and mountains by foot. His South India trip lasted for over two years. Because He was seeing everything in connection with Krishna, wherever He went He saw His beloved Lord Krishna and Srimati Radharani. When He was in Bhubaneshwar, He was so ecstatic to see His beloved expansion Lord Siva.

Wherever He went He made the people chant the holy names of the Lord and gave them the highest perfection of Yoga, which is total absorption in ecstatic love. Then He would instruct them to go back to their villages and share with others what they had received.

4. Why Kanyakumari?

For us one reason is sufficient and that is Lord Caitanya visited this place. Wherever the Lord went that place was transformed into Vrindavana. Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami explained that what Lord Caitanya didn't give in Navadvipa, He gave, that in South India. In Navadvipa at that time many people were very materialistic and ritualistic but in South India people were simple and they opened their hearts to receive the Lord's mercy and attained perfection.

His Holiness Radhanath Swami Maharaj relates his experience: When I was driving here couple days ago from Trivandrum we went to Ananta Padmanabha Swami temple and Adi Keshava temple. As I was driving, I looked out the window and saw a very beautiful mountain, incredible rock formation. And I was thinking, Lord Caitanya, He went to Kanyakumari from Adi Keshava temple. That means He glanced upon this mountain. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He has *acintyashakti*, inconceivable potencies. His glance was filled with infinite blessings and grace. By His mere glance He could fill a receptive person with ecstatic love for God. Wherever the Lord glanced, we should understand, He infused those people and the objects - the sky, the trees, the mountain, the rivers, the land, He infused it with His grace. He showered upon it His intimate blessings. Now things that are material are temporary and are washed away by time, but that which is spiritual is eternal. When Lord Caitanya deposited His love through His glance on all the objects, where ever He went they were forever infused with that grace This is a spiritual principle

5. Becoming Receptive

It is said in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 1, Chapter 13, verse 10:

*bhavad-vidha bhagavatas tirtha-bhutam svayam vibho
tirthi-kurvanti tirthani svantah-sthena gadabhrta*

Great personalities are like holy place personified. And because the great devotees always carry the Lord in their heart where ever they go, the Lord through their heart makes that a holy place. In fact all the holy places are present where a pure saint is present. *Someone like Srila Prabhupada or other great saints the fact is their every word, their every glance does have the power to give us spiritual perfections. But everything is determined by our receptivity. When our hearts are actually open to receive, then that grace can transform us.* Lord Sri Krishna says in *Bhagavad-Gita* Chapter 4, verse 11:

*ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham
mama vartmanuvartante manusyah partha sarvasah*

Krishna tells us, 'according to how you surrender to Me, I will reveal Myself accordingly.' When we go to Vrindavana we are taught that the trees are *kalpavrikshas*, that the Yamuna river, on the material sphere we see a sewage, but it is the transcendental pure water of Spiritual world with lovely lotus flowers. And Sri Sri Radha Krishna and the *gopis* and the *gopas* are performing their eternal *lilas* there. And in that forest the six

goswamis, Narottama Das Thakura, Vishvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, all of the great saints they deposited their grace, their love, their ecstasies everywhere. The place is permeated with grace. That is why it is explained in the *shastra* that when we go to a holy place we can only truly benefit by associating with holy people. *Sadhus words open our eyes so that we can actually see and through their words they open our hearts so that we can actually receive that grace.* By teaching us a lifestyle, a form of *sadhana*, we develop spiritual character.

Our receptivity is according to our humility, our gratitude and our eagerness.

Srila Rupa Gosvami calls 'lobha', the deep intense eagerness for Krishna, to access His grace. When we have that eagerness which is truly possible only if we have a humble and grateful heart, then we are receptive and we are tuned into that spiritual grace.

6. Tuning to Lord Sri Krishna's grace

Just like if someone has a radio he can tune into any frequency, similarly through our service attitude and our eagerness for Krishna, which is based on our eagerness to serve Krishna, we can tune into that grace.

In *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna says "I am the light of sun and moon." Sun and moon are the eyes of Krishna and those eyes give us light, so that we can see with our eyes. If we have receptive hearts, through our service attitude and our *sadhana*, we could feel Krishna's love through the glance of the sun and the moon and it is free for everyone and it is available everywhere even on Arctic Circle.

So as we are on this *yatra* we should be conscious of this that, Lord Caitanya and previous *acaryas* have visited these places and have danced, discussed Krishna *katha* and chanted the holy names of the Lord and have deposited that energy here. Lord Krishna especially manifests Himself as His holy names, *nama cintamani*. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur explained that the Lord's eternal beautiful form, His personality, His love, His abode, His devotees everything is with in His name. *Srila Rupa Gosvami prayed for millions of tongues and ears to chant the holy names and by this prayer he is teaching us that what great treasure is available and possible to achieve for each and every one of us.*

7. Becoming hopeful

The Lord comes and manifests His grace through His devotees to give us hope that there is no situation that is ever hopeless. By associating with people who have faith we acquire faith and in that faith there is unlimited hope and unlimited possibilities. We do believe in miracles and Srila Prabhupada said my miracle is that, *"I have made hippies in to happies."*

dina-hina jata chilo, hari-name uddharilo, tara saksi jagai madhai

Through the example of Jagai and Madhai, Lord showed that there is hope for everyone, if they could do it, we could do it - by the power of the holy name of Lord Sri Krishna!

Chandra Rai, who was like Jagai and Madhai, a murderer and thief, an envious and horrible person, who was willing to kill for the slightest gain for himself, was transformed into humble pure hearted devotee. They were freed from all kinds of sins because they were receptive. Why such extreme examples? To teach us that there is always hope.

The Lord is only concerned with one thing - our sincerity to do the right thing, to take shelter and to live in the mood of servitude, free of selfishness and arrogant envious agenda, to be willing to actually clean our hearts and pray and take shelter.

Lord in His various incarnations killed so many demons and showed that there is nothing so evil anywhere that it can't be cleansed by the Lord.

So whatever negativity that is there in our heart, whatever short coming, whatever lust or envy or anger or greed or arrogance or illusion may be within our heart causing us so much difficulty, making us seem it impossible, if we are just sincere with determination, to live in the spirit of devotion and to take shelter 'ananyas cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate...' Krishna will help us.

Story of Gajendra

When Gajendra was caught by the crocodile in the water, he fought with all his strength but gradually his strength began to wane. In that situation he was very depressed and he realized that neither my family, my friends, my own power, whatever I have acquired as the king of this jungle, nothing material can save me. In a helpless state he remembered the payers he learned in his previous life. And he began to pray to the Lord not to save him but to accept him as His servant. He took shelter in the heart of his heart and the Supreme Lord descended on Garuda and rescued him.

Gajendra could offer simple flower but Krishna doesn't accept what we offer but accepts the intention with which we offer That flower was enough to conquer the heart of God because Gajendra was taking shelter and on that very day he attained spiritual perfection and was transported to the spiritual world.

Story of Dukhi

Dukhi was a simple poor maid servant, she was not educated but she was in the association of Srivasa Thakur. By Srivasa's association she developed a sincere desire to serve everyone and to please the Lord. While all the senior devotees were bathing the Lord, Dukhi would arrange water pots from Ganges. She would ensure that there is water available for the service. She was not expecting any honour; she just wanted to serve unconditionally and the Lord was very pleased with her service attitude and gave her the name Sukhi - the happy one. He not only gave her the name but gave her the happiness; he gave her the highest treasure, the greatest wealth, the perfection of education and knowledge, everything was given to her in that moment by the glance of the Lord - because she was *receptive*.

Many of us read Srila Prabhupada's books or scriptures and some of us don't read so much because we fall asleep as we read or because our minds go somewhere else, so many other important things. Why? Factually *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the literary incarnation of Lord Krishna and every word of it is non-different from Krishna. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the grace of Srimati Radharani manifesting for all mankind in the most intimate way. Sukadeva Gosvami is speaking to you and to me through Maharaj Pariksit.

Story of Kunti Devi, one of Srila Prabhupada's disciple

When Kunti Devi, one of Srila Prabhupada's disciple, was in her last stages there was no hope for her to be cured. She was already paralysed waist down, but even in that condition she was eager to serve the devotees. She was so weak and her bones were so brittle that she could not even hold a book in her hand. So someone gave her a computer and she was reading Srila Prabhupada's books. *She felt that Srila Prabhupada was personally and directly speaking to her. There were tears in her eyes, not out of pain but out of ecstasy, out of gratitude and out of love. She wasn't ready to change her position for anything in the world.* Because she was taking shelter, because of her sincerity she had that receptivity and that is available for all of us. We don't have to be necessarily at the last stage of dying, it is available for all of us anytime now. There is infinite hope if we take shelter of the holy people, the holy names, of Hari katha, in the mood of a humble servant.

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8. Lord sees our intent

The Lord and the great devotees see our intent. There is a story of Sripad Ramanujacarya. There were little children in the area of Sri Rangam and they were trying to imitate the pujaris. They would make offerings out of sand. One day just after they made the *raj bhoga* offering out of sand, Sripad Ramanujacarya came walking by. And they saw, "Oh! a sannyasi is coming. We must give alms." So they ran up to him and said, "Swamiji, we have alms for you." Ramanujacarya humbly put up his begging bowl and they filled it with sand. But it was not ordinary sand. It was sand that was symbolic of their offering of wonderful *bhoga*. Ramanujacarya accepted that sand with great happiness, love and gratitude.

In the *Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu* there is the story of a brahmana who was mentally preparing a wonderful feast for Lord Narayana and the Lord tasted that offering. Lord Krishna says that He accepts a little fruit or water or flower or leaf which is offered with devotion. Lord may be satisfied by a simple offering but we offer the absolute best we have.

9. Devotees: The Embodiment of hope

This hope is very important in the age of kali, especially in the world, in the state it is going today - so much disease, so much pollution, so much anxiety and stress, so much suffering. *Devotees are meant to embody the principle of hope for everyone and in order to do so we have to be filled with that hope ourselves.* From a material perspective everything ultimately is hopeless. We are all going to die! We are all going to grow old. We don't know how old we are. Prahlada told his 5 year old class mates that old means proximity to death; and nobody knows when that moment is going to come. With all the nuclear arsenals, terrorism and all kinds of diseases we just don't know what's going to happen from one moment to next.

From a spiritual perspective we understand that we are all eternal souls, part and parcel of Krishna. Love of Krishna is within our hearts and it simply has to be awakened. So from a spiritual perspective each one of us young or old, whether we are in good health or dying physically, whether we have a good job or we just got fired, whether we have a happy marriage or a difficult relationship, we have infinite hope like Gajendra, like Sukhi, like those little children playing in the sand.

For one who takes shelter of the Lord, the ocean of material existence is reduced to the water contained in the hoof print of a calf. Lord Sri Krishna says in *Bhagavad-Gita* Chapter 7, verse 14:

*daivi hy ed guza-mayi mama maya duratyayd
mdm eva ye prapadyante mayam etãth taranti te*

This pilgrimage is to inspire that hope, inspire that enthusiasm, and inspire that faith. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that this is possible by really sincerely taking shelter of the Lord's devotees by serving them, by sharing our gift with the conditioned souls, by seeing every living being as our brothers and sisters and as a child of God, and by being instruments of compassion and in that spirit crying out the holy names.

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare |
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare ||*

Sri Caitanya Caritamrta explains that for one who remembers the Lord even the most difficult things are easy to accomplish, but for one who forgets the Lord even the easiest things become extremely difficult. To remember Lord Caitanya means to remember His teachings. To be humble like a blade of grass, tolerant like a tree, willing to offer all respects to others and expect none in return, we could receive the grace of the Lord and when we are in that consciousness we can chant constantly. To realize that the Lord and His name are non-different, to realize our eternal relationship with Krishna and realize every living being's relation with Krishna and to act accordingly as the servant of the servant of the servant - that is the treasure we have forgotten.

10. Story of Yamunacharya

As a young boy Yamunacharya won a debate and became a king. He was a very, very devoted Brahmin student but due to the association of ministers and due to his power

and opulence he could not resist from falling prey to the incredible facilities he had. Just like a cloud can temporarily cover the light of the sun, sometimes even great souls can get covered by illusion. During his last days, his grandfather Natha Muni called for his chief disciple Ram Mishra and told him to rescue Yamunacharya. Some years later, after patiently waiting for a proper chance, Ram Mishra went to speak to him but he saw that he had little chance of approaching the king. But this is the nature of compassion of a Vaishnava, a devotee of the Lord, he never gives up.

Never give up

When Srila Prabhupada was living in the bowery and later in the lower east side and he saw people, someone trying to kill him, out of their minds with drugs completely impassioned with illicit behaviour. Srila Prabhupada didn't gave up hope. Major part of his reaching out to people was through Prasadam. Srila Prabhupada was very innovative, creative to somehow or another find that point where people would just want his association and open their hearts to him. He was praying to Lord Krishna on the Jaladuta: give me the words to speak, to somehow or other deeply affect their hearts to awaken that love of God that is within them. Srila Prabhupada did all menial services on his own just to somehow to get them to open their hearts and many did.

So Ram Mishra prayed and had an idea. He found some simple leaves, Tuduvallai leaves, which are very medicinal; they bring about good health, peace of mind and overall happiness. And he saw them just growing like weeds around the palace. So he collected them and brought them to the cook in the king's kitchen. The cook was a very pious man and he accepted them. Ram Mishra melted his heart because really he was so sincere. He cooked the leaves and served it to the king every day. One day Ram Mishra strategically didn't come with any leaves. Yamunacharya called for the cook and asked, "Why you are not giving me the leaves?" The cook replied that, "There is a *sadhu* that comes every day and bring these leaves. He tells me that he loves you so much, he doesn't charge anything in return, he simply wants you to be happy, healthy and peaceful. So he is giving out of his love." King said, "He is not asking anything in return, every day he is coming and bringing these leaves because of his love for me. If he ever comes again I want to see him."

Next day Ram Mishra came with the leaves and brought them to the cook and the cook brought him to see the king. Yamunacharya was very grateful. People were bringing him jewels, gold, land, but the king was not very impressed with all that because everyone had an ulterior motive. But because Ram Mishra was bringing the leaves with, no ulterior motives, out of compassion from his heart, those leaves impressed the king more than land and jewels. Then Ram Mishra told him that he was his grandfather's disciple and had come to handover the great treasure that his grandfather had left for him. Yamunacharya was in need of money so he immediately agreed. Ram Mishra told him that he had to come alone. He told him that this treasure is behind seven walls, it is guarded by a huge serpent, every six months a *rakshasa* comes from the south to protect it and it can only be discovered by the chanting of the mantra. Yamunacharya trusted him that he had no ulterior motives. He had faith in him that he didn't come to

take something, he came to give. By giving those little leaves, with no ulterior motive, his compassion opened the heart of the king - to trust him.

Essence of preaching

When we speak about preaching or sharing Bhakti with others this is the essence. Srila Prabhupada presented the philosophy as it is, without adulteration but due to his compassion, his selfless concern for us, people opened their hearts with trust to receive it and that is what we must do, follow in the footsteps. Our behaviour, our motivations should really be to just be an instrument of compassion to serve others and not for popularity, not for wealth.

Lord Caitanya taught us how a devotee should be. He prayed, I do not want material wealth, nor the pleasure of opposite sex, nor fame, nor great knowledge or even liberation from suffering, I only want to serve You birth after birth. And that is the way we should learn to be to each other and we should pray to be that way to every living being, to serve them by being an instrument of Lord Sri Krishna's compassion.

Yamunacharya left everything and everyone to travel alone with Ram Mishra to get this treasure. They would rest under a tree and discuss *Bhagavad-Gita* and gradually they finished the entire *Bhagavad-Gita* and by that time the dormant devotion that was hidden from the king's vision, began to awaken. It was like the monsoon clouds were parting and the sun was again shining. He developed a taste for Krishna Consciousness. Yamunacharya said, "I have started to feel how totally unsatisfied I was with all my wealth and power and all these material things. By hearing *Bhagavad-Gita* from you I am developing a thirst to hear more and more." Yamunacharya was now reluctant to even take the treasure that his grandfather had left for him but Ram Mishra told him that Natha Muni will not give him any material treasure. So he brought him to Ranganatha temple and Yamunacharya had the *darshan* of Lord Ranganatha, the Lord of Laxmi. Laxmi is the goddess of all fortune and wealth, spiritual wealth and spiritual fortune. On a regular basis Vibhisana comes to worship the Lord and protect the Lord and Ram Mishra said the mantra by which you can attain the treasure of love for Ranganatha is the chanting of the holy names. Yamunacharya chanted the holy names and saw the beautiful form of Lord Ranganatha. When Yamunacharya saw that form, his hair stood on end, tears flowed from his eyes and he fell to the ground unconscious and surrendered his life, his soul, his everything at the lotus feet of the Lord.

By associating with a *sadhu*, Yamunacharya became receptive and his heart was open. By his own sincerity, he took shelter of the grace he was receiving, and that is in fact possible for every one of us, may be not immediately, but we must have hope. With that hope, never leave the association of saintly people, never give up our *sadhana*, our spiritual practices. If it takes one birth or ten million births, it doesn't really matter, it's guaranteed if we are sincere.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, he taught, do not try to see Lord Krishna, because if you try to see Krishna, you will see just some wood or stones, but try to serve Lord Sri

Krishna in such a way that Krishna wants to see you, because when Krishna is pleased by our seva, Krishna will reveal himself to us. Krishna will reveal all of His opulences when we open our hearts with sincerity through our desire to serve.

11. Mood and Purpose of the Yatra

Kanyakumari which is famous for the confluence of three oceans has now increased its glories by the confluence of four oceans - the ocean of wonderful enthusiastic happy devotees - many thousands and thousands and thousands of them.

Lord Krishna is *karuna sindhu*, He is an ocean of kindness. We want to bathe in that ocean, we want to bathe in that ocean of Krishna's kindness forever and we can do that everywhere and anywhere. You don't even have to get wet, all we have to do is with a humble and devoted heart take shelter when we chant the holy name - *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*.

During this *yatra* it is very important that we focus on our purpose. Our purpose is to become purified and to access that infinite grace that we have been speaking of. Our purpose is preparing our hearts to be receptive, to receive it and we do that through our *seva*, our service attitude, our enthusiasm - enthusiasm to hear the glories of Lord and the purpose of life, enthusiastic to chant God's names individually and together in *sankirtana* and enthusiastic to serve, not thinking I am enjoyer, I am the proprietor, I am the controller. In trying to give other devotees comfort and happiness and putting them before ourselves, we can get the greatest spiritual blessing.

So there is going to be things that just don't work and there is going to be crowd and there are going to be things that go wrong. We shouldn't be disturbed; we should be happy that we are together with devotees, we have Krishna, we are in holy places, it's beautiful. Be patient, be enthusiastic and try to serve. The primary experience that inspires people when the Yatra is over is not the places that we see, the temple we visit but the quality of association they have with each other because the quality of association that we have actually enables us to experience the places and the temple.

12. Creating Vaikuntha atmosphere

Srila Prabhupada explains that the Vaikuntha atmosphere is where everyone is thinking everyone else is so important, let me serve them. If every single one of us is in that spirit, let me put all others in front of myself, let me really be in the mood of *seva* to create an atmosphere that can fill the whole world with *bhava* - with love. When devotees share that *bhava* or *seva*, it fills the whole world. It is an opportunity to absorb ourselves in hearing and chanting and serving. Let us not discuss anything except spiritual subjects and practical ways in which we can serve each other - that is real silence - not to waste our energy or waste our time speaking or doing anything else. And let us approach every situation in a prayerful spirit, praying that we can open our hearts to receive Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's, Srila Prabhupada's and the Supreme Lord's grace. And let this great ocean of devotees merge into the three other oceans and together experience that *karuna sindhu*, that ocean of Krishna's kindness.

13. Karuna-sindhu

Lord Krishna is *karuna sindhu* that means He is an ocean of compassion which is so deep and endless that it encompasses the entire material and spiritual existence.

Just as the sun evaporates water from the ocean to create clouds, and these clouds are carried by the wind to provide life, giving water for all living beings. Similarly from this infinite ocean of Lord Krishna's compassion, He sends His loving devotees, carried by the breeze of His own grace, to shower us with that water, to shade us from the burning sun of material existence, to quench our thirst for real pleasure and real love.

It is by grace that we are eligible to have the facility and association of devotees by which we can purify our hearts and as the heart becomes pure, the eternal light of love of Krishna, which is dormant within our hearts is awakened and shines forth.

14. Andal

Among the 12 *alwars*, Andal was a lady, who from her birth manifested a very similar love in separation from Lord Krishna like the *gopis* of Vraja. According to the great scriptures of Sri Sampradaya the history goes as follows.

Mukunda and Padma Devi were in the line of highly respectable and pure hearted Brahmin priests. They had a son named Vishnu Chittar, also known as Periya Alwar. From his birth he had natural affinity for Lord Krishna. He didn't require philosophical proofs or sensual experience to be convinced of what the goal of life is. His love was already awakened and the expression of that love was his natural desire to serve Krishna.

Story of Malakara

When he heard this story of how when Lord Krishna was on His way to the wrestling arena, He went into a small alley, because He was searching for a simple flower garland maker named Sudama. In the *Vishnu Purana* this flower garland maker is mentioned as 'Malakara'. When Sudama saw Krishna he invited Him into his simple shop and offered the best garland he had to Krishna and offered nice garlands to all His friends. Sudama understood that the ultimate perfection of all of his desires was to serve and please Krishna.

On the path of bhakti the end and the means to receive the end are the same. It is not that we chant thinking that it will bring us to the place where there is no need for service, where there is no need to chant the holy names. The holy name of Krishna has descended from the highest spiritual realm and in the spiritual world, the eternally liberated souls are forever chanting the holy names:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Service is the highest reward

The reward of service is simply that we have served. *Srila Vrindavana Das Thakur in Caitanya Bhagavat has said that the highest position that one can possibly achieve is to have the title 'Das' - a servant of the Lord.*

When the *gopis* sang their beautiful song of separation, Krishna again appeared before them and told them, "For your love and service I can't repay you even with all that I have." Krishna is the proprietor of everything but He said, "Even in a life time of Brahma, I can't repay you for your love. I am unable to do so. Please be satisfied with just that loving service in itself." That in itself is the highest treasure, the opportunity to serve.

When Sri Hanuman ji returned from Lanka Lord Ramacandra was overwhelmed for the sacrifice that Hanuman ji had done for Him. At that time He was living in *Kishkindha Kshetra* and had nothing to give as reward to Hanuman ji. Sri Rama said, "I want to reward you, you have risked your life, you have endeavoured with such love, with such courage and you have pacified the heart of Sita. I owe you everything but I have nothing to give you. All I have is My embrace." Sri Rama embraced Hanuman with tears of gratitude and for Sri Hanuman that was the ultimate reward.

The reward of service is simply that we have served. That in itself is the highest treasure, the opportunity to serve.

Sudama just wanted to please Lord Krishna and he was taking great risk to do so. He was living in the regime of Kamsa. Practically every day he was sending *asuras* into Vrindavana. And Sudama was one of his own residents giving free garlands to Krishna and surrendering his life to Krishna. He was taking risk, Kamsa had spies everywhere, but he didn't care. This is love.

Vishnu Chittar becomes a malakara

Vishnu Chittar, in his own humility, wanted to be like Malakara. In a village called Sri Villiputtur, he had a deity called '*vata patra sayi*'. In Srimad-Bhagavatam it is explained how Markandeya rishi saw little Gopal sucking upon His toe, floating in the waters of dissolution on a banyan leaf. Acarya's explains that the devotees experience so much happiness tasting the dust of Lord Krishna's lotus feet, which means tasting the sweetness of serving Krishna with love, that Krishna wanted to taste what His lotus feet are like. The Supreme Absolute truth Vishnu wanted to taste that and sweeter than that is the dust of the lotus feet of those who love Krishna.

Vishnu Chittar or Periya Alwar decided to dedicate his life growing flowers in a garden and making garlands to offer to his deity. He was living a very simple life growing flowers and making garlands. His ultimate experience and goal in life was simply that he could offer that garland to the Lord and the Lord would accept it, He wanted nothing else.

Debate

Once upon a time there was king of Madurai whose name was Vallabhadev. He conquered all the provinces around him. He was a righteous king who loved his citizens and his citizens loved him. Sometimes he would disguise himself to wander around the kingdom, just to see what the people were thinking, what they were doing, how they were living. Once he came upon a sleeping Brahmin. He was very interested to hear from this Brahmin so he woke him up. The king asked the Brahmin about his identity. The Brahmin replied that he had just come from a pilgrimage to Ganga in North India. The king said, "Can you tell me some words of enlightenment that will help me in my life." The Brahmin

said, *"Eight months a year a man will labour, so that he can enjoy happiness for the four months of rainy season. Half the day the person will labour, so that he can enjoy coming home at night. Similarly the human form of life is meant to pursue self-realization, so that we can enjoy the highest liberation after we die."* This really had an impact on the king. The king thought that I have achieved everything that I wanted and have no wants and no needs. But I have not done anything for my own spiritual life. He went to his chief minister who was a learned scholar and asked him "please tell me how I can prepare myself for spiritual realization?" The minister said, according to the dharma *sastras* you should bring an assembly of great learned scholars and arrange for a debate and whoever wins you should enquire from him and follow what he says.

The king called for all the great scholars from his entire kingdom. They were all eager to win this debate. There was a state flag, which was in the assembly hall and the king put a very priceless treasure, wrapped in a cloth, and tied it with the rope and hoisted up near the flag and whoever was to win the debate, was supposed to bring down the treasure and give it to the king and they would cut it open.

Meanwhile back at Sri Villiputtur, Vishnu Chittar was performing his simple service of gardening and making malas and offering it to the Lord. One evening he had a dream and the Lord spoke to him, "I want you to go to Madurai, there is going to be a debate of the greatest scholars in the entire kingdom. You go there and speak on my behalf for the welfare of all humanity." Vishnu Chittar was struck with wonder, he thought that I am a poor, illiterate gardener, how possibly can I enter into a tournament with the greatest literate of entire country. The Lord responded in the dream, "Why do you worry? I will do everything for you, arise and go."

Next day morning he began his journey, there was no question, this is faith. When he arrived in the royal assembly, king Vallabhdev gave a very warm reception. Meanwhile the other scholars opposed this. They were thinking why the king is honouring a dull headed, illiterate fool. He doesn't even know a single word of Vedanta. The minister of the king asked Vishnu Chittar to speak. He was praying to the Lord in his heart to empower him just like Valmiki Muni and little 5 year old Dhruva were empowered.

Vishnu Chittar stood up and said that the conclusion of all the Vedas is very clear, it is self-evident. He said, the beginning of alphabet is letter "A" - Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita that of letters I am "A". "A" according to the *Pancahratra* is the symbol of

Vishnu who is the Supreme Brahman and ultimate liberation can be achieved simply by meditating on Krishna.

When the king and all of the great pundits, heard the simple gardener speaking with such profound realization, conviction and wisdom, they were stunned, there was complete silence, and right in front of everybody's eyes, spontaneously the treasure began to lower and eventually came in front of Vishnu Chittar. At that point the entire assembly applauded and the king called for the royal procession. Vishnu Chittar was taken on a well decorated elephant accompanied with musical instruments, Brahmins chanting mantras, the entire town assembled to witness this. Vishnu Chittar was feeling himself to be a totally empty vessel that was filled with the grace of God.

15. Bestowing blessings upon the Lord

Lord Vishnu himself was so pleased that He personally wanted to come and see. Vishnu Chittar looked up at the sky and there he saw, Lord Narayana dressed beautifully, sitting on Garuda accompanied by Laxmi devi. They were being worshiped by great demigods as They lovingly looked upon Vishnu Chittar. When he saw Them he was stunned, he had no pride, he was overwhelmed with love.

Forgetting the ultimate supremacy of the Lord, he began to pray for blessings upon the Lord as a parent blesses the child.

God's love for His children is inconceivable, so why cannot God make His children's love for Him inconceivable.

When we meditate on the Lord's greatness as Him being omnipotent, omnipresent, protector of everyone, then we see Him as the protector of everyone. And when we meditate on the Lord's tenderness then we want to protect the Lord, this is the nature of spiritual rasa, just like we see Dasratha Maharaj's love for Lord Rama, Janaka Maharaj's love for Sita or Guha's love for Lord Rama. Hanuman knew about the supreme position of Lord Rama but still he was feeling pained seeing Rama suffering in separation from Sita and was ready to do anything to alleviate that pain. Sometimes the Lord inspires His devotees to be His protector and this principle is manifested in its ultimate state in Sri Vrindavana dhama.

Sukadeva Goswami explains that Yashoda mayi and Rohini, as they were seeing little Krishna and Balarama as babies getting into so much mischief, it is said that they were constantly immersed in the ecstasy of anxiety. Vaikuntha means the place of no anxiety, and here we find that the highest level of love of god is full of anxiety, because it is anxiety of love for Krishna. The reciprocation of love between the Lord and His devotees is inconceivable. God's love for His children is inconceivable, so why cannot God make His children's love for Him inconceivable.

16. Nature of Compassion

The Lord allows us to love Him in this way, to wish God joy, to wish God all perfections of His desires. When Lord Caitanya asked Srila Haridasa Thakur how we will deliver all

these conditioned souls, Haridasa Thakur, seeing the Lord's anxiety, told Him that, "My Lord, just by coming here and chanting the holy names everyone has been delivered."

We find devotees who have this intense affection, they are praying for everyone. Vasudeva Dutt prayed that let everyone go to Goloka and let me suffer on their behalf. When we make spiritual advancement we pray for every living being. Let every living being get love of Krishna. As we begin to taste the sweetness of Krishna's love we desire, let everyone taste that love for Krishna.

This is the nature of compassion. Srila Prabhupada when he was on the Jaladuta he was writing a prayer, after several heart attacks, sea sickness, not knowing anyone, where he was going, not having any money, he wasn't just praying for his family back in Calcutta, he wasn't just praying for the associates in Vrindavana. He was praying for all living beings. He was risking his life for people never met before.

When we make spiritual advancement we pray for every living being. Let every living being get love of Lord Krishna. As we begin to taste the sweetness of Krishna's love we desire, let everyone taste that love for Krishna.

17. Andal appears from earth

After offering prayers to the Lord., Vishnu Chittar returned back to his village to resume his service of offering garlands to the Lord. One day he was digging in the special Tulasi garden.. As he dug the earth he discovered a beautiful little female baby child. She was completely covered with dirt, just like Janaka maharaj uncovered Sita devi from earth, Vishnu Chittar uncovered Andal, one of the most worshiped and praised saints in the Sri Vaishnava tradition. Her beauty was incredible, enchanting eyes, lovely curly hairs, her smile beamed with affection. He understood that this is a divine personality.

Consecrating the garland

He raised her as his own daughter and understanding that she was a divine personality; he never checked her and let her do anything she wanted. Everyday Vishnu Chittar would make beautiful garlands for the Lord. When he was out in the garden, Andal would come into his puja room and take the garland and put it around her neck. In fact she would decorate herself nicely with garlands and then go to a well or look in a mirror. She would speak "I look so beautiful today. I look so elegant especially wearing this wonderful garland." And as she was thinking like this, she was rejoicing, because she was so beautiful for Krishna.

In this world when people do that, it is usually to attract people to their beauty. That's a bodily conception but in the case of the queens of Dwarka or the gopis of Vrindavana they wanted to make themselves super excellently beautiful for the pleasure of Krishna. It was pure unalloyed devotion. As Srila Prabhupada told, Krishna doesn't see just what we do, but He sees the intention of why we do it. One person could be singing the kirtan, thinking that let everyone hear what a beautiful voice I have, and let everyone adore me. And another person may be singing thinking that I am nothing. Krishna has given me the power to sing, let me just enthuse everyone to love Krishna who is in His

name. I am just an instrument. One pujari can decorate Krishna in such a way that the whole temple and the whole congregation thinks that he is the best pujari, no one dresses Krishna like him. I am going to come to temple whenever he dresses Krishna. And another pujari is thinking, let me decorate Krishna so absolutely nicely that everybody falls in love with Krishna.

One day Vishnu Chittar was astonished, he happened to come in when Andal was wearing the garland. He could not believe what he was seeing, he told her that now the garland is contaminated and cannot be offered. That night Krishna appeared to him in a dream and asked him about the Tulasi garland. Vishnu Chittar told the Lord how his daughter had contaminated the garland by wearing it herself. Hearing this Lord proclaimed, "never ever give me any garland that was not first worn by your daughter Andal." Henceforth Vishnu Chittar always gave the garland first to Andal and then offered it to Lord Vishnu.

18. Andal's marriage

As she grew, her love for Krishna became more and more intense. She would spend her days in feelings of separation, crying and weeping, longing to be reunited with her Lord. Like the gopis she would imitate Krishna's pastimes.

Her father was very anxious to see her in this condition. One day he asked her, "you are of marriageable age now. What mortal can I marry you to?" Andal replied, "If you try to marry me to any mortal person in this world, I will die. I have given my heart to Kia."

He understood that no mortal would be married to my daughter so he asked which form of the Lord would she like to marry and she said read to me the different forms of • the Lord and I will tell you. So he read the list of all these 108 names of the Lord and she was listening and at the very end he said the name Ranganath of Rangashetra. When that name entered her heart, tears welled in her eyes, her limbs began to tremble. Her heart instantly gave itself, totally to Ranganath and she told her father "I'll marry no one but Him."

That night he had a dream where Ranganath appeared to Him and said, "Do not worry, I will propose to you for your daughter." At the same time, the head priest had a vision and the Lord told him, "Go to Sri Villiputtur with all royal paraphernalia of the temple and bring Andal, the daughter of Vishnu Chittar to marry me." So the head priest had a royal procession with canopies, umbrellas and trumpets, Brahman priests chanting mantras and hymns. They went all the way to the village and when they came to the house they gave the message to Vishnu Chittar who went to his deity of the Lord and asked permission and the Lord said whatever Ranganath wants you should do. He made a beautiful palanquin and put his daughter in that palanquin then put a screen so that no one could see her because now, he was thinking, she is the bride of God.

They brought the procession many, many miles into Sri Rangam and there the king Vallabhadev and all of his kingdom was there, so there was a wonderful reception, they brought the palanquin into the inner sanctum of the Lord's altar. There Vishnu Chittar

lifted the screen and Andal very softly stepped from the palanquin. Everybody was awestruck to see her beauty, not just the beauty of her body but the beauty of her character, the beauty of her soul, the beauty of her devotion.

With her beautiful lotus like eyes she gazed upon the lotus feet of Sri Ranganath and softly she stepped forward and laid beside Sri Ranganath. She pressed her body close to the Lord and before everyone's eyes she entered into the body of Ranganath, she entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord in the spiritual world. Seeing this, Vishnu Chittar was joyful to see his daughter resume her position as the eternal consort of the Supreme Personality of Godhead but at the same time his heart filled with sorrow that his daughter was gone. He returned his village and for the rest of his life he worshipped the Lord by making garlands for Him.

19. Infinite hope in Lord Krishna's mercy

Lord Krishna is Rasabihari - He enjoys the love of His devotees and He enjoys showering His love upon His devotees. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu travelled throughout South India to give everyone the opportunity to taste the sweetness of that love and to attain that perfection beyond the joys and sorrows of material existence, to realize that we are eternal, to realize that we are part and parcel of God. Krishna is most beautiful, most playful, all loving and all sweet and is eternally calling each and every one of us back to His eternal pastimes.

There is infinite hope in the grace of God, and in the association of sincere devotees we can become strengthened and empowered by that hope.

Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda are giving the most rare of all treasures to anyone and everyone. This was the special feature of Lord Caitanya's South Indian tour. Krishna das Kaviraj Goswami has recorded these pastimes to inspire us with hope and give us direction. There is infinite hope in the grace of God, and in the association of sincere devotees we can become strengthened and empowered by that hope. Krishna is supremely pure, there is nothing that could be so impure that cannot be instantly purified by Krishna. *No reason ever to be depressed, no reason for us to ever be discouraged. Whatever we have done is done, let's move forward doing the right thing, with hope in the supreme power of Krishna's grace, of Sri Radha's grace, which is fully manifested through the hearts of the devotees and which can be fully realized through sincerely crying out the holy names.*

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*

*trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniya sada harih*

If we can just aspire for that, to be nothing beyond being the servant of the servant of the servant, to offer seva with pure love, to aspire to be humble like a blade of grass, forgiving and tolerant like a tree, to offer all respect to others and not really care whether we get it or not. If we just have this sincerity, Krishna will reveal His eternal

loving form, His qualities, His abode and His supreme sweetness to us and then we will understand what it means to chant the holy names of the Lord constantly.

Lord Caitanya manifested the love of Sri Radha and the *gopis* which according to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the highest and purest revelation of divinity. Unmotivated, unconditional loving service is the highest dharma. *When Srila Prabhupada said 'chant Hare Krishna and be happy,' in that small sentence all the wisdom of all the great scriptures can be realized, if only we take it seriously. But we cannot chant Hare Krishna and be happy unless we are really trying to inspire other people to chant Hare Krishna and be happy.*

20. Seek the essence

Lord Caitanya, while on His South India tour, met a tribe of nomads called the Bhattathari. The Bhattatharis dressed as *sannyasis* but they plundered, exploited and cheated innocent people. By their powers and techniques they would bewilder the minds of young girls and use them to allure men and recruit them in their camp.

Throughout the history a great impediment to real spirituality are the people who put themselves in the guise of religious leaders, but who have ulterior motives. The result of this is that common people lose their faith.

Srila Prabhupada would sometimes say that the fact there is counterfeit money means that there is real money. Similarly, instead of losing our faith in spirituality, because of counterfeit spiritualists, we can make great progress and receive great blessings, if we honestly and sincerely seek the essence.

Any spiritual path has its value to the degree it helps us realize the essence. Lord Krishna tells in the Gita that the real goal of true religion is to surrender to Him. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 1 chapter 2 verse 13 explains the nature of surrender,

*atah pumbhir dvija-srestha varnasrama-vibhagasah
svanusthitasya dharmasya samsiddhir hari-tosanam*

Whatever our occupation, whatever our life style, whatever rituals we perform, their purpose is to please Lord Krishna. Krishna is not pleased with dishonesty, ulterior motives or hypocrisy, He is pleased with love. He accepts the love with which we make our offerings.

In Sri Navadvipa dhama, there were many great scholars who were antagonistic and they considered Lord Caitanya, His devotees and the kirtans in Srivas angan to be the greatest threat to their positions. These caste brahmanas used their scholarship and expertise in performing religious rituals to earn their living. On the other hand, Lord Caitanya gave so much prominence to Haridasa Thakur, who, by social standards, was considered an outcaste. Haridasa Thakur was again and again subjected to so much blasphemy but he was always very humble and forgiving.

21. Real religion

In today's world, in the name of loving God, people hate each other, discriminate against each other, terrorize and murder innocent people and declare wars upon each other. This is due to their thirst for power, control and prestige. Often people come and say, if you really want to give peace to the world, you should teach people not to be religious any more. Now from a higher perspective this is extremely misleading. But for a person who doesn't have that higher perspective, it makes sense.

The conflicts are not about any of the religions, the root cause behind all of these strife and conflict is "ahankar" or the material false ego. The conditioned living being is in forgetfulness of its own eternal spiritual nature and its loving relationship with God and when even a tinge of love of God awakens in the heart, we feel compassion and respect for all living beings what to speak of people of other religions.

Ahimsa

Mrgrari was a cruel hearted hunter but in the association of Sri Narada muni, chanting the name of Lord Krishna, he became so pure at heart that he was offering his sincerest honour and respect even to the ants. *Sometimes in the name of Krishna consciousness we could be very nice to ants, but very -very tormenting to other devotees.* Hitler was a vegetarian, he was very selective, he won't eat animals, but will torture humans. But real ahimsa means that, through our body, mind, words and thoughts, we absolutely avoid causing any harm to anyone, physically, emotionally or spiritually.

Sometimes great souls may use strong words towards other people but that is not out of envy but out of compassion. Just like a surgeon cuts open the body to remove the tumor, similarly great souls may use strong words to show our disease, which is separating us from our eternal spiritual loving nature.

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Spirituality is about transformation

Guru and *sastras* warn us that even if you worship the deity very punctually, according to all the rules and regulations but if you are not kind and respectful towards the devotees and people in general then it is being on kanishta platform. If we are performing sacrifices very elaborately but are not conscious that the same Lord who is manifesting as *yajna* in the sacred fire is also in the heart of all living beings, and we are not eager to respect and serve them, who are so dear to the Lord, then we are not pleasing the Lord. *Real spirituality is about transformation.*

Humility and gratitude are the qualities that make the heart a fertile field for the seed of real devotion to grow. Therefore Lord Caitanya gave us this verse, *trnad api sunicena*

taror api sahisnuna amanina manadena kirtaniya sada harih. Anyone who follows this cannot be hateful to anyone. He may hate the disease but never the diseased.

22. Lord rescues His devotee Kala Krishna das

The Bhattatharis were doing every possible illicit activity to get more and more members so that they could control them and get greater power. There are different types of greed. Some people are greedy for money and some for power. You could be naked without any clothes, living under trees and be exploiting people for power, control and fame.

Association is critical

Kala Krishna das was Lord Caitanya's personal assistant. He was very simple and gentle but somehow the Bhattatharis bewildered him. They used beautiful young woman to seduce him and by their association his intelligence was polluted. Association is so essential, out of 64 items in the execution of devotional service, 5 are most important and out of the 5, the first item is the association of devotees. That association empowers us with faith and with grace by which we can follow everything else.

This material existence is very difficult to overcome but one who takes shelter of the Lord can easily cross beyond it.

To take shelter means to follow what God gives us, and He teaches us how to take shelter. It begins by associating with people who are taking shelter. It doesn't mean we hate others, we want to serve everyone but in order to get the power to serve others, we need to associate with people who have that power. Association empowers us with faith and with grace by which we can follow everything else.

From the opposite perspective, *mahat-sevam dvāram dhur vimuktes tamo-dvaram yositam sangi-sangam*, by associating with saintly people the doors to liberation are opened and by associating with selfish, egoistic people, addicted to satisfying their own senses the doors - to ignorance are opened.

Kala Krishna das was allured into sense gratification and he left Lord Caitanya's association. He was travelling alone with Lord Caitanya, he was seeing incredible spiritual miracles of devotion and compassion every day every moment, but his intelligence became so polluted that he left that association and went to the Bhattatharis.

Bhagavad-Gita explains the system of how progressively we disconnect from Krishna. Contemplating the objects of the senses we develop attachment for them, from such attachment lust arises, when lust is not fulfilled anger comes, from anger bewilderment of memory, when the memory is gone intelligence is lost and when the intelligence is polluted we don't know what we are doing.

Lord Caitanya went to the camp of the Bhattatharis and asked them, "Why are you keeping my assistant, I am in a

renounced order of life, a sannyasi I require my assistant and you are also in the renounced order of life, so you should understand. Why do you cause Me pain? Give back My servant.” He spoke graciously to the Bhattatharis. If the Lord would have been in a different incarnation, they would have been annihilated instantly.

The Bhattatharis became outraged and they picked up their weapons to attack the Lord. Lord Caitanya just stood there and suddenly all the weapons fell from their hands and began to attack the Bhattatharis. They began to scream, howl and shout in pain. Meanwhile Lord Caitanya grabbed Kala Krishna das by the hair and took him. He saved His devotee. Kala Krishna Das resumed his service and Lord Caitanya accepted it.

On another occasion Lord Caitanya said, “blessed is the devotee who never gives up the service of the Lord and blessed is the Lord who never gives up His servant.” Once we taste the nectar of the loving service of Lord Krishna, even if we fall away, nothing of this world can ever compare, it is just a matter of time till we come back. Just by Krishna’s all attractive loving nature He drags us back - *param drstva nivartate* - the higher taste!



Kanyakumari Yatra

[References: His Holiness Radhanath Swami Maharaj South India Yatra 2010 and Sri Sri Radha-Gopinatha Temple - ISKCON Chowpatty, Mumbai]

Places nearby Kanyakumari

#1. Sri Adi Kesava Temple, Thiruvattar: Sri Adikeshava Perumaal temple is an ancient and a very important temple situated in Thiruvattar. Thiruvattar is 46 km from Kanyakumari, 30 km north-west of Nagercoil (in Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu), 6 km north-east of Marthandam town and 54 km from Trivandrum. *This is the temple where Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, during His South India tour, discovered the 5th chapter of Brahma Samhita. Brahma Samhita is said to contain 100 chapters. This scripture is so old and so sacred it was practically lost to the general population. But Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu understood the supreme importance of this scripture and He found it in the Sri Adi Keshava temple at Thiruvattar. As soon as Lord began to hear and read the content of Brahma Samhita, He was overwhelmed with ecstatic love. Lord transcribed Brahma Samhita to take it with Him and to share it with His devotees and ultimately with the whole world.*

For more details please visit: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=17635>

#2. Sri Ananta Padmanabha Swamy Temple, Trivandrum: *This is one of the most prominent temples of India. It is considered as one of the 108 Vaishnava temples (divya sthanam), one of the seven moksha sthalas and one of the six Narayana sthalas. Lord Balarama, Lord Nityananda and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited this temple. It is the holiest abodes of Lord Vishnu. The main deity, Sri Padmanabhaswamy, is a form of Vishnu in Anantha sayanam posture (in yogic eternal sleep of yoga-nidra).*

For more details please visit: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=16066>

#3. ISKCON Parassala: Parassala is a small town at the southern border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in-between Trivandrum and Kanyakumari. *ISKCON (Hare Krishna) temple at Parassala was established in 2002 and through Sunday programs, feasts, festivals, book distribution and the annual Lord Jagannatha Rathayatra; temple is propagating the philosophy of Krishna consciousness to the people in this area. The main deity in the temple altar is of Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. The temple complex also houses a Goshala (protective shelter for cows) and a school imparting Vedic education to young children. The Sri Adikesavaperumal temple in Thiruvattar, Sri Ananta Padmanabha Swamy Temple at Trivandrum, Thirupathisaram near Nagercoil, ISKCON Nagercoil, Sthanumalayan temple in Suchindram, Sri Krishnaswamy temple in Neyyatinkara, Kanyakumari and many other places of Vaishnava interest are easily accessible from ISKCON Parassala.* Website: www.iskcon-parassala.org

#4. ISKCON Trivandrum: International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has temple in Trivandrum. For details please visit: www.iskcontrivandrum.com

#5. Rameswaram: Rameswaram is situated at the extreme south end of India on the Gulf of Mannar. It is one of the most prominent holiest pilgrimage places in India. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (canto 10 chapter 79 verses 16-17) states that Lord Balarama visited "Setubandha [Rameswaram]" in the course of His pilgrimage. Lord Caitanya also visited Rameswaram during His South India tour as mentioned in *Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya Lila* Chapter 9 verses 199-209. For more details please visit: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=18620>

#6. Sri Rajagopala Swamy Kulasekhara Perumal Temple, Mannarkoil near Tirunelveli: This is the place where Kulasekara spent his final days. He stayed here for some time serving the presiding Deity, *Rajagopala Swamy*. There in association of Vaishnavas he worshiped the deity of Rajagopala Swamy and returned to the spiritual world at age 67. Mannarkoil is a small village located at a distance of around 5 km from Ambasamudram near Tirunelveli. From Tirunelveli it takes about 1 hour to reach Sri

Rajagopala Swamy Kulasekara Perumal Temple in Mannarkoil. This temple is over 1000 years old and has beautiful architecture.

#7. Thirukurungkudi Temple: This is an important Vaishnava temple and is amongst 108 *divya-deshams*. Known as the '*Dakshina Badri*', Thirukurungkudi temple is located about 40 km from Tirunelveli (and about 15kms from Nanguneri) off the Nagercoil highway at the foot of the Mahendra hill on the Western Ghat. Thirukurungkudi is a village with history dating back more than 1500 years. At Badrinath, Lord Narayana instructed Sripad Ramanujacharya. Here, at Thirukurungkudi, He took the role of a disciple and obtained *Vaishnava* initiation from Ramanuja. Hence the Lord here is called Vaishnava Nambi. Thirukurungkudi is also known as *Kuranga-kshetram*. Kuranga is the name of Bhoomi (earth) devi who performed penance for the Lord in this holy place. The Lord here has 39 different names including Kurungkudi Nambi, Tirupparkadal Nambi and Malai Mel Nambi. Under half a km from the main temple is the Thirupaarkadal Nambi temple and about 8 km from here on the Western Ghats is the Thirumalai Nambi temple, from where Hanuman is said to have taken the leap to Lanka.

Significance of Kanyakumari: www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-8WsEmUhxc

Mayapur TV: <http://Mayapur.tv> / **Vrindavana TV:** <http://Vrindavan.tv>

Holy Pilgrimages: www.holy-pilgrimages.com

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE |
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE ||**